

Compliments
John Henry Smyth

SPEECHES

BY

JOHN HENRY SMYTH, LL. D.,

Knight Commander of the Liberian Humane Order of African
Redemption.

Delivered April 16, 1891, at Washington, D. C., and October 14, 1891, at
the Southern Interstate Exposition, at Raleigh, N. C., with an Appendix.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

LINOTYPE PRINT.

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PREFACE.

In presenting the following pages to the public, it is just to those among the Negro race who differ in opinion so widely from the author, to state that my purpose from the first till now has been to cement the Negroes and mixed people rather than to separate them, and certainly not to alienate any one who may have been a friend of mine.

My concern for that portion of my brotherhood and sisterhood, who are, by citizenship and nativity, American, in their present and future relation to the American white folk, induced me to express freely and unreservedly my convictions as to their duty to themselves and their fellow-citizens, after mature deliberation as to facts and circumstances which I found it necessary to advert to in my discourse. If the interest I feel and express for my own, which does no injury to any other class, and I cannot conceive that it does, has been just cause of offense, I cannot but regret it, although I have no apology to make for it.

My regret is not so much personal, but has relation to the Negro who so much needs friends in America, and who is so wronged by enemies. The people who have been crushing the Negro in this country are white people; they have constituted the upper mill stone, but the people of the Negro race, now somewhat enlightened, are quite determined that their brother of the mixed races shall not be the nethier mill stone to grind them in pieces. I have no prejudice now, nor ~~never~~ had, nor ~~never~~ will have, against man or woman on account of race, color or creed. But I have a preference for my race and color that I have for no other

race or color. This is a reserved right which I claim for myself, since it cannot possibly injure or harm any other person or persons. If one may love his father or mother more than some other one's parents; if one may love his own wife better than some other's wife; if one may love his own issue better than the issue of another; if one may prefer his own house to another's mansion; if one may prefer his own horse to another's steed; if one may prefer America to Europe, because he is an American and not an European, without harm or injury to Europe or the European, then it does seem justifiable, commendable, natural and right to prefer his own race to an alien one without being falsely accused of prejudice against another or others, and without incurring the hostility of the otherwise fair-minded and intelligent.

The statements herein made with regard to the prospective Exposition at Chicago in 1893 are made in the interest of the white American as well as the black American, and above all in the interest of the preservation of the integrity of the history of the intellectual material development of the two races who for weal or woe constitute American citizenship.

J. H. S.

1813 15th St., n. w.,
Washington, D. C

Discourse Delivered at the Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, Rev. *Wm. Lee*, Pastor, on the Evening of April 16, 1891

Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The time for indulgence in figures of rhetoric, merely among ourselves and in the presence of our friends, on the recurrence of Emancipation Day, should have long since passed. And I thank God, and I thank the civilization of which we are a part, that true eloquence, acceptable and effective speech, must consist of practical thought, of facts illustrative of such thought, and the pure adamant of truth. Hence I shall not be expected to follow the beaten track of attempting to make an oratorical display. I shall mark out and follow a somewhat novel course on this occasion. Being so advised, you will not be surprised if my utterance be homely, be stripped of ornamentation. Twenty-nine years have passed into an irrevocable oblivion since we, by the arbitrament of war, and by the sanctions of law, have been "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled" from American chattel slavery in its worse forms. The experiences had, the lessons too well taught in that worst of schools, and too well learned, are remembered either to make other, and other, and other, and other twenty-nine years of the future profitable to us or profitless to us. Emancipation, enfranchisement, freedom—precious words, ay, precious memories to those whose lives antedate the first twenty-nine years of citizen manhood; and to those who have come into being since the advent of Emancipation, not less than to your seniors, these words should afford joy, happiness, for they have opened to you boundless possibilities. True, you know by tradition only, and history alone, what a hell your elders passed through to this valued goal, a form of liberty. The shadow of liberty is better than slavery and oppression in any form. Yet if you doubt that this day should be the cause of rejoicing on your part, it is due to your inability to understand the daily, monthly, and yearly scenes that are being enacted of which you are a part. This day has the effect of bringing the

people together, temporarily uniting us. This is cause of congratulation. Your lack of the sad experiences of your parents deprives you of a correct appreciation of the joy which this day causes to well up anew from the very depths of the hearts of old Negro men and women of this District and this broad land. Thank God that you do not bring from the past, as they do, memories freighted with the perpetration of every crime in the calendar against black humanity; memories full with every outrage against Negroes; memories laden heavily with every sorrow possible of being borne by black men and felt by black women. More than other men and women we have shown capacity of endurance. On this account you cannot understand the full force of the dawn of the 16th of April in this District and the recurrence of the 1st of December. But all possess filial affection, all of us love and honor our parents. Then ever remember this as the day of all other days in the calendar; at least, as the day of your parents, and honor it for their dear sakes. Remember it for the hope it gave them for you, the hope of becoming what you now are: American citizens of African descent, with minds and hearts enfranchised, fitted for development to the full measure of your individual capacities. This hope of mind and heart enfranchised, liberated, has not been realized, but will be when they are gone. I know, and you know, how many of the educated among us would have you give up its celebration. They say that slavery is dead; that you are free. Ah, that we were! But as one Negro not spoiled by and not dazzled over much with this Emancipation which does not emancipate, this protection by possession of the ballot which does not protect, I conjure you celebrate the 16th day of April here, and that other Emancipation also, until you can feel that you are free men.

Within the pale of good order, decorum and law, it is not only your privilege but your sacred duty to commemorate our Emancipation, incomplete though it be. In this matter you are to be your own mentors. In this matter you are not to look to the favored race in this or other lands alone for precedents for this kind of celebration, but into your own heads, and obey the natural pulsations of your own hearts. You are not the imitators of them, but disciples of your own ancestors in our distant fatherland. In

the home of our great ancestry, civilized and uncivilized, history presents to us throughout the Nile valley, in Pyramids, the Sphinx, and in temples, and in abundant traditions of every tribe, the custom of rejoicings over birth and of giving honors to death. To-day you rejoice that the 16th of April was the birth of American legalized manhood and womanhood, and you rejoice on this day over the eternal death of American slavery, for yourself and for your country, for America. Celebrate the day yourselves, and teach your children that they may teach their issue to perpetuate the habit till it shall become a custom; until every vestige of the "stain of the fetter and the lash" shall be wiped out of the souls of every one of us who wear the "shadowed livery of the burnished sun;" until there shall dawn an advanced civilization, the highest Christian civilization, when head and heart in this broad land, rather than pigment and flowing locks and base gold, shall be the only possessions required in man and woman to make American citizenship sacred in church and state.

God has in his forbearance design and method. Before the end shall come His word shall reach the uttermost part of the world, and white Americans shall learn that He is the father of all men and that all men are brothers in fact. When that time comes, then we, as children of an earthly father, will not despise, ridicule, degrade and persecute the other on account of race, color, or previous condition.

Christianity, which is to become the most potent influence among men, has reached Asia and Africa, to some extent unhampered by color prejudice, and it is destined to come into the hearts and heads and beautify the lives of American Caucasians as it has in a fair degree the European races whence they are descended.

And now as to ourselves in particular: We were brought here Negroes, and always will be, but we were bond men, slaves. Now we are free men, and their descendants, and will continue so mid all the possible mutations of time and politics. This is a great fact; remember it. You were Negroes before you became American citizens, and you will continue Negroes. First a race, then a part of a nation. Negroes, Americans, and now Negro-Americans. This is elevation for us; this is growth for the whites; this is progress for all. "Honor thy father and

thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This injunctive and directory thought teaches the lesson of the preservation of the race, the continuity and perpetuity of the species. As the mother was, so shall the daughter and wife be; as the father was, so shall the son and husband be. As God made man so must he, if the divine benediction shall come to him, remain. Education as received by the Negro in this country seems to impress him with the idea that he must be other than God made him. The greatness of another race, by which the Negro is here environed, seems to teach the lesson daily that he must advance, if he advances at all, on other than his own race lines. This is false in theory and worse than false in practice. So powerful is this lesson that not only is the belief current among many colored people of intelligence, but even some black men and women, whose mental vision is otherwise clear, seem to be defective on this point. We see daily advertisements of various devices for straightening the hair and bleaching the complexion.*

Consideration is being shown in the school-room and in the churches because of the color of the skin and the texture of the hair. Indeed the appointing powers of the Government, whether intentionally or not we are unable to say, appear to have made a compromise, a sort of concession to this feeling, by appointing to positions of honor and trust from the ranks of Negro citizens almost entirely men who are the least shocking from a complexional standpoint to the fine sensibilities of the whites, apparently disregarding the fact that character and mind should be the only standards of the man. The whole atmosphere of the educated mixed and black people is impregnated with the necessity of change in complexion and hair; alteration of the work of a divine hand, because forsooth it is not the mode, not fashion.

This folly, this worse than criminal fashion, seems to have originated among the somewhat refined and educated or higher classes of colored people. This is most pernicious. It must be denounced from the pulpit and the rostrum, in

* This paragraph has been specially excepted to by many. Can it be that I have inadvertently stated what is false? If so, it was ignorantly and innocently done.

the salon, in the drawing-room, on the street, everywhere. I would not on this occasion give this matter the importance of an allusion but that it, like any other deadly contagion, may reach the masses of the Negroes and further undermine the foundations of race integrity and self respect. Sap the foundations of manhood, of womanhood, and the super-structure falls into shapeless nothingness.

Slavery was not a good school for the formation of character; and so true is this that the American nation suffered by comparison with the free nations of Europe while under the baneful influence of that unhallowed institution. Thomas Jefferson, philosopher, statesman, and slave master, fully comprehended this fact.

The white American deprecatingly alludes to our immoralities and makes them an excuse for the denial to us of equality before the law. He points to the different complexions among us as one of the strongest evidences of our immorality. But we ask in the interests of justice and fair play on which of the two races rests the responsibility for these divergencies of types among us. Is the poor, black, ignorant slave woman, or the all-powerful white master of the South to be held accountable for this iniquity? Surely the answer to this question need not be given here, except to quote one sentence from the editor of the "New York Sun," who has recently been making a tour of the Southern States. He says: "They have improved immensely. One great improvement is in the purification of the breed. They are getting blacker, an evidence that freedom produces purity."

And again, the Negro is not lacking in those higher elements of human nature which create in man sentiments of love and respect for those of his own blood. He has been loyal and true to his half-brothers and sisters, while their white fathers have not been willing to accord them the ordinary rights and privileges of human beings. For the men and women of mixed blood among us as well as for the men and women of pure African blood, who have fought their way up through many difficulties, who have reached a high standard of excellence in character and intellect, the Negro shows an equal amount of love and devotion. He points them out with pride, as men of his own blood, who within themselves disprove the oft repeated statements of the

white brother that Negroes are naturally an inferior race and are therefore incapable of any very high form of mental or moral growth. But the white brother to satisfy his own prejudices says it is "the reinforcement of the Anglo-Saxon blood" of the mixed man that has stimulated his powers to such an extent as to make him an exception to the rule of Negro inferiority; and in the next breath he will proclaim that the mulatto has imbibed only the worst elements of character of both races. So much for Anglo-Saxon inconsistency, for Anglo-Saxon prejudices. But notwithstanding these prejudices, I have an abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of the Negro cause in this country. At present his mind is sick and enfeebled by the mass of unwholesome mental food with which it has been crammed, like the overcrowded stomach of an infant that has been permitted to indulge too freely in rich food. But when he is fully aroused from the dazed condition in which he was left when the shackles of slavery suddenly fell from him, when he recovers his balance, when he gets over the confusion of mind in which he has been thrown by the false education he has received; when he begins to throw off some of the accretions from without that have been fastened on his mind but—happily for us all, not on his nature—by the false teaching of the last twenty-five years. When he begins to develop and grow from within, in other words, when he is clothed in his right mind, he will begin to give outward expression to the thoughts that are within him, and he will begin to do his own work in his own way. To this end must the colored and black people alike unite their powers, and work heartily and tirelessly for the elevation of the Negro in us, the enfranchisement of the white man from his prejudices against us, the enfranchisement of ourselves from mental and moral degradation.

We must work unceasingly for the hastening of the dawn of the fullest and most complete emancipation and equality before the law, civil and political. This is the work of the race; it must be done by the race. We owe it to ourselves; we owe it to our friends among the white race to justify their belief in our possibilities.

John Boyle O'Reilly, poet, patriot, and scholar, in a famous address on the Negro American, uses the follow-

ing language: "No man ever came into the world with a grander opportunity than the American Negro. He is like the new metal dug out of the mine. He stands at this late day on the threshold of history, with everything to learn and less to unlearn than any civilized man in the world. In his heart still rings the free sound of the desert. In his mind he carries the traditions of Africa, the songs with which he charms American ears are refrains from tropical forests, from the great inland seas and rivers of the Dark Continent.

* * * * *

"All the inhumanities of slavery have not made him cruel, sullen or revengeful. He has all the qualities that fit him to be a good citizen of any country; he does not worry his soul with the fear of next week, or next year. He has feelings and convictions, and he loves to show them. He sees no reason why he should hide them. His will be a great natural expression, if he dares express the beauty, the harmony, the color of God's world as he sees it with the Negro's eyes.

* * * * *

"What the black man needs most is confidence in himself and his race. He is a dependent man at present. He is not sure of himself, a self-respecting man. Not all men can be distinguished, but assuredly some distinct expression of genius will come out of any considerable number of colored people who believe in themselves; who condemn and despise the man of their blood who apes white men and their ways; who are proud to be a Negro; who will bear themselves according to their own ideas of colored men; who will encourage their women to dress themselves by their own tastes, to select the rich colors they love; to follow out their natural bent, and not to adopt other people's stupid and shop-made fashions. The Negro women have the best artistic eye for color of all women in America.

"No race or nation is great or illustrious except by one test—the breeding of great men.

"The Negro will never take his stand beside the white man till he has given the world proof of the truth and beauty of heroism and power that are in his soul."

I am aware that there are some among the colored people who will not subscribe to this doctrine. They say that the question of race must be kept in the background; that we must strive to be good American citizens and nothing more. These individuals seem not to recognize the fact that race is the most persistent thing in nature. He who is without the race quality has lost the very essence of his being. "Race is the key to history." "Language and religion do not make a race," &c.*

The man whose race devotion is unimpaired makes the best citizen of any country. He will cull from nature's grand and varied storehouse his own peculiar treasure, and bring and lay it on the altar of his country's greatness.

It is hard for one to comprehend the attitude of a man who would rather be accounted a citizen of the world, as it were, than to be regarded as a member of one of the great race types that help to complete the harmony of the universe. And yet I can, to a certain extent, appreciate the motives that actuate these individuals who desire to keep their identity with the Negro race as much out of sight as possible. In a country like this where so much has been accomplished in every department of life, both physical and mental, it requires much steadfastness of purpose, great strength of character not to wish to sever all racial ties with a people who, through force of circumstances, form as a class the very lowest strata of society, and thereby escape the blighting influence of caste, civil and political discrimination, social ostracism, insults and indignities of all kinds that are constantly being heaped upon us by the so-called superior race. But in all good feeling and love we give warning to these individuals who feel that they ought not to sacrifice themselves and their interests to the Negro cause; who are not willing to be counted among the martyrs in the interests of human progress and human liberties, that their desires cannot, must not be considered in this matter; that the work must not be hampered, the hopes and prospects of the race must not be blighted by any improbable and undesirable theories of amalgamation and absorption that may meet the hopes and wishes of the few. We believe that the day is ap-

* Eudymion. Beaconsfield.

proaching, aye, it is almost here, when the masses of black and colored citizens will clasp hands, measure the heights and depths of the way, and turn their faces toward the rising sun and march steadily up the hill of progress side by side with the white race, each earnestly working for its own and the other's good, and both for the honor and glory of the country. Because the white man is unwilling to absorb the black, and the black is not willing to be absorbed by him, it does not follow that the stronger race will always oppress the weaker, that the rights and privileges that belong to the Negro by an inalienable God-given right shall forever be denied him. No, the time will come when these things shall be remembered as only one of the stages of man's evolutions from a lower to a higher order of life, when his brutal instincts seem to have mastered him, seemed to have forced out of him for a time all the humane, all the nobler qualities of his nature. If these hopes be not realized, if this is too much to expect, then is civilization a failure, and Christianity will have failed of the end for which it was given to man.

My appeal to-night is for race loyalty—Cultivate race love. Let nothing that concerns the Negro, wherever he may be found, be indifferent to you. The act of every Negro, whether it be good or bad, has a bearing for good or evil on every one and on every other one. Our sister-republic of Hayti after its establishment, through martyrdom the most sublime that the earth has ever seen, through agonies, the cruelest of modern times, sent some of her sons forth who, like that son of France, La Fayette, fought to unfetter our country from the grasp of Britain. And yet, our newspapers daily deride, ridicule the efforts of the Haytiens to make good government, and we, so far from censuring this prostitution of journalism, laugh too, join in the ridicule of Hayti. The feeble, but heroically struggling men and women who went out of our own ranks and planted on the shores of the fatherland a light, the rays of which have streamed northward and southward and eastward in Africa, the republic of Liberia, we are indifferent to. American white men smile when the name of the state is mentioned and ask, "what are these people doing?" "Will they ever amount to anything?" And black men in America say

it is a failure, and leaders of ours have no good words to say to you of the government of that state. They seem to fear it will make them less American to interest themselves in anything that concerns the race outside of the United States. "To thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." *

In the twilight of time, aye, mid the night of ages, when time was young, the African had birth. Throughout historic times uninterruptedly this race has existed. When time shall have become hoary with age, when the end shall be, we shall as a race be the last to look upon the earth beneath us and the heavens above us. The sciences have decreed, and the consensus of the intelligences of the 19th century has approved the declaration, that the law of the survival of the fittest, however inhuman and cruel it may be to the sensitive and humane, is the law of existence. Having passed under and through all climatic changes, from the torrid to the temperate and to the frigid zones; having suffered under the tyranny of all the other races; having achieved victories on the fields of carnage in two hemispheres; having been bondsmen to all our brothers; having unaided sundered our fetters and destroyed the flower of Frankish chivalry in the isle of the sea, and having aided in suppressing the most formidable rebellion of a republic here, thereby securing our liberty under the sanction of constitutional law, is it too much to predict for such a race perpetuity coeval with time?

In the creation and continuity of such a race the hand of an Almighty power is visible. An ancient writer, Herodotus, the first if not the most eminent historian, "a man laborious in his researches, judicious for the most part in his decisions, and apparently free from sinister intentions and national prejudices," has said of some of our progenitors in his time: "Of all men the most eminent in storing the memory and by far the most erudite of any persons with whom I have made acquaintance." That they were a blameless race.

"Lybians are the most healthy and the longest lived of men." In proof of this he gives an ethnic illustration. The emissaries of a Persian king, who came as spies to the

* Hamlet.

country of the king of Ethiopia, are reported by Herodotus as giving as the test of the longevity of the Persians the age of 80 years as an extreme period. Said the Ethiopian: "I wonder not that you live so few years, since your people subsist on rottenness; nor could they attain even that number of years if it were not for the aid of drinks," meaning wine. In this article alone he allowed themselves (the Ethiopians) to be inferior to the Persians. With longevity on our side there is everything to be hoped for—nothing to be feared. With an irreproachable ancestry what may not the future have in reserve for the Negro?

This memorable testimony might be discredited if it stood uncorroborated by utterances modern. To quote the language of an Egyptologist of distinction, not unknown to the learned of America, and with whom the scholars of this city are acquainted—Amelia Edwards, in her "A Thousand Miles up the Nile"—on African races: "As with these fragments of the old tongues, so with the races, subdued again and again by invading hordes, intermixed for centuries together with Phœnician, Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arabic blood, it fuses these heterogeneous elements in one common mold, reverts persistently to the early type, and remains African to the last. So strong is the tyranny of natural forces."

Dr. E. B. Taylor, of the British Association, at Sheffield August 22, 1879, as reported in the London Times, assigns reasons for believing that the pioneers of human progress were probably of a dark or black race rather than a fair one; and he observes that the white races have now for so long a time been leaders of civilization that it does not come easy to us to think that we may not have been its original founders.—(Editorial.)

But some will be skeptical as to our relationship with these ancient and modern peoples. To such let me refer to an American authority, a statesman, diplomat, and litterateur, the Hon. Hugh LeGare, some time since Secretary of State of the United States, than whom in linguistic accomplishment there has been no successor to him in that office, a South Carolinian, and a slave holder. In the De-Bows Review of 1840 he says: "The same Negroes who are our slaves here are the descendants of the builders of the Pyramids who have, by a succession of wars, been driven

from East toward West Africa." Such is the testimony borne by history as to our great ancestry.

Such may we be under God and the benign influence of law, and an enlightened Christian American civilization, if we maintain our race integrity and are temperate in all things. Remember that absorption is annihilation.

Says Dr. Channing of our race in contradistinction to other races: "We are holding in bondage one of the best races of the human family. The Negro is among the mildest, gentlest of men. He is singularly susceptible of improvement from abroad. His nature is affectionate, easily touched, and hence he is more open to religious improvement than the white man. The African carries with him more than we—the genius of a long, meek, long-suffering nature."

The Westminster Review some years ago made the following remark of us: "Were we forced at this moment to search for the saints of America we should not be surprised to find them amongst the despised bondsmen."—January, 1853.

This was said when we were enslaved before the war. During the war, when our fetters were worn loosely, we proved the truth of our gentleness and long-suffering and loyalty to the master class; and since the war we have proved to a demonstration our capacity for self improvement.

But we are not without most valued authority with reference to the motherhood of our race. I pause to say that the future of all races is to be determined by the character of the mothers of the race. The rule governing continuity and progress is the same for us. The revered and venerated scholar and cleric of the race in America, Dr. Alex. Crummell, of St. Luke's P. E. Church, Washington, D. C., uses such language as this with reference to the black womanhood of this land:

"And when I think of their sad condition down South, think, too, that since the day of Emancipation hardly any one has lifted up a voice in their behalf, I feel it a duty and a privilege to set forth their praises and to extol their excellences. For humble and benighted as she is, the black woman of the South is one of the queens of womanhood. If there is any other woman on the earth

who in native aboriginal qualities is her superior, I know not where she is to be found; for I do say that in tenderness of feeling, in genuine native modesty, in sweetness of disposition and deep humility, in unselfish devotedness and in warm motherly assiduities, the Negro woman is unsurpassed by any other woman on earth."

POLITICS

We were, perforce of circumstances, thrown unprepared by experience or training, state craft or economics, into the gulf stream of politics. Our frail bark glided smoothly upon a sea which was calm when the war closed, when the Constitution was amended. A part, the Southern part of the white race was disfranchised as a result of the war. The sea became tempestuous. The white men of the South regained citizens' rights. Then the storms which beset our political life lost us the good ships Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas and Florida.

The captains and the mates left us to paddle our own canoes upon unknown, untried waters, amid shoals and quicksands, and along reefs and hidden rocks.

Our record as political seamen in the South has been that of heroes and martyrs. Our record everywhere has been marked by an almost unbroken loyalty to the Grand Old Party. White men of the party have been rewarded for gallant, successful struggles, for the maintenance of Republican supremacy they have made through us, and our rewards have been husks. This has continued long enough.

We have sustained protection, and have remained unprotected. Negroes have died for the Grand Old Party, and are being killed now, and the survivors inherit discrimination in place and in preferment. Any other than loyal Negroes would have denied the faith or retired from the ranks. But we believe in the great principles upon which our form of government was founded, as contained in the Declaration of Independence, and we believe that the white people of this great country believe in fair play for all men; that in both political parties, in all political organizations in this land, the basic principle is founded

upon liberty, equality, and fraternity. Experience wider than that of years ago, and wisdom, the heritage of time, is slowly teaching the lesson which we are so slow to learn—that we must hold to principles and intelligently discriminate between men, white and black. The white Republicans and black Republicans stuck to their colors, but deserted their color-bearer in Pennsylvania. So must you and I do when we are discriminated against; when we find white Republicans or black Republicans false to our interests as Negroes and as American citizens. Their sins of commission and of omission must be visited with our unqualified disapproval, denunciation, and reprobation, and by the sequestration of our confidence and respect. The party is yours, as it is others who subscribe to its principles and labor for its continuity, and it is your and my right to remain in the party and read men out of our confidence who prove false to their trusts. This is a reserved right.

For the most part we are Republicans. All of us will not always be connected alone with the Grand Old Party. We will be Democrats, Alliance men. We will reflect every shade of political thought in this country. When this is so to any very appreciable degree, then will the Negro throughout the country be less a political slave, more a free and patriotic American. The Negro, like the white man, will become possessed of “that robust and virile independence which holds country and honor above party.”

We embraced the political life full of enthusiasm and zeal, and this was right; how else could we have thus far run the race, unless we begun with some little fire? But this will not last, and unless we are warned we may be offended politically and fall away. When we have lived longer in this world and outlived the enthusiastic and pleasing illusions of our youth, we will find our love and pity for the race increased tenfold, our admiration and attachment to any particular opinion fall away altogether. You will not find one party perfect any more than any other, nor those connected with it free from mean and sordid motives, though we think that all act from the noblest. This is the most important lesson that a man can learn—that all men are alike; that all political creeds and opinions are nothing but the mere result of circumstances; that no

party is, on the whole, better than another; that no political creed does more than shadow forth, imperfectly forth, some one side of political truth; and it is only when we begin to see this that we can feel that pity for mankind, that sympathy with man's disappointments and follies, and his natural human hopes, which have such a little time of growth, and such sure season of decay.

Patriotism is a sentiment broader than factions or parties, higher and deeper than political dogmas, the safeguard of our individual and national liberties. The Negro needs friends. His friends, those who may be made his friends, are to be found in all the political parties in America.

Then let us from this 16th day of April, 1891, renew our trust in God, and with concern in our hearts for all humanity, "with malice towards none, with charity for all," with the divine afflatus upon us, we can sing with patriotic ardor in the language of him whom we can claim in common with other Americans as our Longfellow:

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
 Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
 Humanity with all its fears,
 With all the hopes of future years,
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
 We know what Master laid thy keel,
 What Workman wrought thy ribs of steel,
 Who made each mast, and sail and rope,
 What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
 In what a forge and what a heat
 Were shaped the anchors of thy hope.
 Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
 'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
 'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
 And not a rent made by the gale;
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
 In spite of false lights on the shore,
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
 Are all with thee—are all with thee!

Discourse in Reply to Speeches of Welcome, Made by Rev. J. C. Price, Commissioner in Chief of the Negro Exhibit, and Hon. Henry P. Cheatham and Others. Response for the Southern States and for the District of Columbia by John H. Smyth.

Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen and Patrons.

With the same heartiness and cordiality with which you have welcomed us here, which is extended the Negro race from the several Southern States and the District of Columbia, I, on behalf of the States and the District, reciprocate most heartily. In this connection there is a recollection explanatory of the sincerity of this reciprocation of feeling which comes to me from thousands of miles away, from the great Sahara desert, from a people who so much resemble the African, inspired of a religion which the African is rapidly assimilating. I refer to the Arab, or Mohammedan salutation. When you greet the Arab or Negro of the desert, whether speeding by you with the swiftness of the wind upon his steed, or leisurely traversing the sands afoot, when greeted, he returns literally the greeting received, "Salaam alaku, alaku Salaam." So I, on behalf of those whom I temporarily represent, return literally the heartfelt welcome. I feel myself singularly fortunate in being invited here to say a word at this place—the capital of the "Old North State." I shall not soon forget, on your part, fellow citizens, this additional mark of respect and consideration.

If it be warrantable publicly to give expression to a feeling of pride; if it be not offensive to so express one's self; if it be not regarded as making invidious distinction to express a sentiment of pride in the land that gave us birth, then I say that this day I feel proud of the fact that I saw the light of day in the South.

I said once, advisedly, as I do now, that in the United States the Southern Negro is indigenous; the Negro elsewhere in the United States is an exotic. This is the American home of the race. Here nature allies itself with her humanity more than elsewhere. Man is more of the soil, the atmosphere, the products of the soil. Here the heart beats normally and warmly for man. Here, the warmth of the sun, consciously or unconsciously, is transmitted to man's soul. Here all the passions are stronger.

When properly regulated, under the wholesome influence of a practical Christian civilization, man will recognize in act his duty to God and his fellow man, man's neighbor will be loved as himself, and there will be a social Eden, as there is now a vegetable one. While hate is more intense here than elsewhere, it is of shorter duration. While cruelty is more cruel here, contrition and regrets are most sincere. The milk of human kindness has more of the cream of love upon it in the South than elsewhere.

And for the Negro, for us, let us indulge the hope, cherish fondly the expectation, that reparation for the wrongs done us directly by the South, done us helpless, innocent victims, countenanced and condoned by the nation, shall be fullest and most complete here. I love the South because nature here is more akin to nature in Africa, because here the Negro is more in accord with his brothers in the far off fatherland, which will in the years that are not yet be influenced greatly toward a better, higher, civilization through the American Southern Negro. I love the South because, strange as it may seem, the whole people in habits and character are more alike than elsewhere in America. When war's memories become shadowy and indistinct; when the past relationship which antedated the war shall be recollected only as an historic fact; when intelligence on the part of the poor blacks and poor whites shall supplant ignorance; when character shall be possessed by the masses in the place of general degradation; then will the races here show a patriotism to the nation and a loyalty to home more ardent than elsewhere.

This is a day which marks an epoch in the history of the Negro citizen of the United States.

This Southern Inter-State Exposition, a movement inaugurated twenty-six years after a war which, had it resulted otherwise, would have made the Negro an unknown factor in the industrial progress of the South, is indeed important, significant to us as a race, to the South, to the United States. The end of that war was universal enfranchisement, in which we as a race have so large a share, thank God!

To us, this Exposition cannot but be gratifyingly astonishing, that Southern white men uninfluenced by other motive than a disposition to show what has been accom-

plished in the entire South, by all, black men and women, as well as themselves, under the hallowed influence of freedom, and Southern home rule. In view of what the projectors of this scheme have done in urging upon the Negro citizen to come forth with his accomplishment of brawn and brain; in view of the conspicuity given the Negro exhibit; in view of the integrity to fact shown by making an actual, real, veritable representative of the race, in his tout ensemble, and in his soul, Dr. J. C. Price, commissioner-in-chief of the Negro department, this cannot but be recognized as a great compliment to the race; and I desire to emphasize the fact of the significant import for us of this Exposition. The Southern whites have in this Exposition declared in act their unqualified recognition of the existence of the equality of the Negro before the law as an industrial factor in the autonomy of the South.

This act alone, separate and apart from all other, is destined to give more permanent hope to the race in this section of the land than the fullest and most complete political recognition of him by both great political parties could possibly vouchsafe to the race. This industrial recognition means more security to life, more protection to property than has existed heretofore. This industrial equality will reach every cabin throughout the South, and illumine with hope the soul of every black man and woman, and will have an influence, as it shall be known, upon the black yeomanry from Maryland to the Gulf of Mexico, throughout America. This just and equitable consideration is given ungrudgingly to that race which from 1620, when a remnant of blacks were disembarked upon the banks of the James, which, till this hour, has toiled "from morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve," for others without "reward or hope of reward," till the clash of resounding arms caused the labors of the field to cease, the shops of the mechanic and artisan to be closed, and all this beautiful, God blessed, semi-tropical land to bristle with bayonets, and "grim visaged war's wrinkled front" to frown upon nature and nature's God; and after the battles had been fought, victories won, defeats sustained, this race resumed the labors left off; and for twenty-six years of cruel exactions, of barbarous treatment, of

half paid and unpaid toil assisted greatly in fertilizing with hot, scalding tears, and bloody sweat the sterile savannas, in building up stably and more beautifully the waste and devastated places, and caused cotton and tobacco to resume their lost empire in the world's markets, and cereals and vegetation for life's sustenance to grow more abundantly than heretofore; and this race is entitled to this equality of representation in this Exposition in which we are seen as Negroes, and at the same time this representation does credit to the economic sagacity of Southern white men who so recently seemed to countenance the grossest injustice and wrong done us in every relation of life, and reveals before and above the Negro the bow of promise for Ethiopia in America. The motive which inspired the Southern white folk to desire to have us here, to encourage us to make this distinctive display of the results of our genius and industry along the lines we have worked, some will say, is purely selfish; it may do less credit to their hearts than their heads; and may be the resultant of a desire to induce capital foreign to the South to tend thitherward, to seek this field of investment for the material advancement of the projectors and the Southland. Granted, we are black Southerners, we directly and indirectly will be benefited, and the nation will be made the richer thereby, so that we have no concern about motives, and, if we have, is not the motive commendable? "We are in it."

You black fellow citizens, white fellow citizens, and the world, behold to-day a great historic fact, the Negro, the rejected stone, a necessity to the building, an integer in Southern development, not here by proxy, not hotch potched, thereby made invisible; invited here as men to form a part of this great Southern Exposition of Southern material development. Our enemies here and elsewhere in the United States are now forever estopped from denying the existence in us, and the display by us of mind and hand capacity, if not like accomplishment, and the potentialities of a people who have literally made bricks without straw, of a people who, without entering into the labors of others, have reaped, though denied the right to sow. May the lessons we have shown on our part in fairs and expositions of our people in the several States

where we have held them, may the part we sustained at the Cotton Exposition of New Orleans, have their influence upon the members of the next Congress, to the end of securing to us a similar opportunity and occasion of showing our separate and distinctive capacity, to the world, at Chicago, that Anglo-Saxons, the Negroes and the Indians constitute the composite citizenship, and residents of the United States, by giving to each specific representation, and adequate appropriation for such representation at the World's Exposition under the rules governing that contemplated Exposition in 1893. As now arranged, regulated and officered, "white and black are to blend, soften and unite a thousand ways," so that there will be no black. As now arranged the United States is less liberal, not as to legislation, but in fact, to the Negro as to representation than were the Southern people at New Orleans, than in this Southern Inter-State Exposition. This is unjust to us, this is a falsification of the history of American industrial, agricultural, scientific, and artistic development, under the guise of "no color line," of equality. We in this want equality, not identity. The Negro pure and simple desires to be seen for what he is, and wishes not to be white; he has no complaint to make of God or to Him for having made him in His image.

A word more directly to us, to the men and women of the race. Brethren, we have grown from a few slaves landed on the banks of the Hudson and the James in two hundred and seventy years to nearly eight millions of free-men and citizens. We have lived amid assassinations, riots, arsons, midnight raids, lynchings, inspired and executed, let us believe, by white men of the baser sort; we are the heirs of a hundred thousand brave, courageous, patriotic and loyal black men who fell for us, and yet amid all, in the providence of God, we are as fruitful a race here as in the land of our great ancestry. In this great fact we read Negro destiny as an American citizen and as an African descendant. Mistakes, grave, but correctible, have been by us made. Mistakes that must now be recognized and now corrected. In religion we have erred. Not the Semitic, not the Roman, not the Anglo-Saxon, but our religion must be God and his Christ as the manifestation of the Negro's inner self, in contradistinction to the religion of other-

racess which make them seek salvation for themselves rather than humanity.

We are to exemplify in our love of God the love of the whole human race, outside of ourselves as ourselves.

'Twas given to Jos. Mazzini, a layman, to teach this doctrine more clearly than any Caucasian. We are to emulate not strangers in religious error, nor imitate them, but to illustrate the religion of the African fathers of the church, our progenitors racially and geographically.

In education we have erred, but the correction is easier than in religion, because we have taken but a few steps, our oldest university is not twenty-five years old, and our oldest school masters have had us in training but twenty-six years. We begun too near the top. Trades should have preceded professions. Industrial training of the boy and girl is a necessity for all present and after life. Mere intellectual development of the schools is not a necessity of existence.

This alone is a hindrance to successful, useful living, instead of an aid. The hands of the future man and woman must be trained to the labor of the field, the shop and the sea; and of the multifarious home domesticities. This training full and complete, or I should say contemporaneous with the work of the brain in the school house is right; all other theory and practice is radically wrong.

Learn first to buy the land by the sweat of the brow, erect the habitation by the sweat of the brow, victual the larder by the sweat of the brow, clothe the body by the sweat of the brow—all this before the organ or piano is bought or bric-a-brac. The white man is a worthy exemplar of this. Imitate him closely

Accept education of the schools in common with the whites, but neither seek nor insist upon it unless the instructors are equally mixed blacks with whites. The white man here in America is not broad enough to give you all he has. The Negro instructor will give the Negro pupil all he possesses, because in so doing he is perpetuating himself. The white brother cannot by any possibility see himself in the Negro. If it were possible, he would behold a caricature. If black men and women can point the way to heaven for us, when qualified intellectually, they can best point the way of life to us. God's image in black,

in the Negro, was made by Him for His glory. As we are to return to Him, let there be no mistake in His identity. This idea may be novel, but as we learn God it will be made plain.

Much has come to us early through the media of political forces, but politics are not a panacea for the known and fancied ills of which we are the victims.

Political parties have their uses. They have not as such benefited the people to the extent that have the fields, the ploughs, the work shops, the banks, the co-operative building and kindred associations.

The great mass of labor in every civilized country is dependent for life, property and the pursuit of happiness upon wise legislation, equitable laws governing contracts, rather than on theories and platform declarations. Every political organization possesses in the rank and file in the majority, patriotic citizens, interested in the material well being of the community of which they are citizens. So that, while it is your duty to understand the principles governing political parties, and your privilege to seek peacefully the ascendancy of your party, yet their principles don't plough fields or stock farms or heat the iron or fashion it upon the anvil, stock the shop or sell the goods. Recognize your duty to yourselves, and to your several communities; courageously march forth to the discharge of it, and this Exposition will be a great incentive to higher achievement on the shown lines and on new and untried lines of material progress.

If I have been by you understood, my presence here to-day will be to me a personal benefit, and to the race a service which I have cheerfully rendered.

To you white men of the South, if your civilization be not a sham, but be a Christian one, you will in every walk of intellect and material development associate your best friends, the Negroes.

Remembering that the nation, a great soulless entity, must so far differ from all other corporations as to comprehend and transmute into practical acts its duty as set forth and declared by Shakespeare, "Tis not enough to help the feeble up, but help him after."

APPENDIX

(From the Washington Post, March 11, 1891.)

THE COLORED SIDE OF THE FAIR.

A Just Demand for Recognition in the Management.

The demand made by Negroes of prominence that the President shall "recognize" their race by appointing a Negro Commissioner to see to the due exhibition of Negro achievements at the World's Fair is something more than a just one; it is practically wise as a suggestion tending to the interest and success of the Fair, which, from the point of view of patriotism, is of higher consequence than any question of race recognition can be. There is scarcely anything of all that we have to exhibit which is more interesting or more instructively significant than would be the due and adequate illustration of the progress made by the Negroes in intelligence, morality, education, and the capacity of achievement during the quarter of a century since their release from slavery. Considering all the adverse conditions created by unavoidable circumstances and intensified by political folly and worse, the record of Negro advance in that brief period may fairly be reckoned among the marvels of history, and its proper exhibition at Chicago must attract a degree of thoughtful attention and awaken a sympathetic interest beyond what is probable in the case of any other exhibit. We have nothing to show at Chicago which is better worth showing and seeing than the visible illustration of Negro progress—nothing which will reflect greater credit upon our institutions or give us better founded hope for the future. But if this progress is to be in any adequate way exhibited preparation for it must be begun now and prosecuted with careful intelligence and enlightened zeal. The exhibit to be of any real

value must be something more than a haphazard collection of the products of Negro labor. The work of organizing it properly will require the undivided attention of at least one mind from this time till the Exhibition shall open, and it is fit that a Negro should be its director, if for no other reason, because his success in ordering it will be of itself an exhibit of the capacity of his race to produce executive ability.—New York World.

EDITORIAL NOTICES

(Daily State Chronicle, Raleigh, N. C., October 16, 1891.)

The Chronicle makes no excuse for printing in full the speech delivered by John H. Smyth, a leading colored man, at the Exposition grounds on Wednesday. It shows the advancement of the Negro race.

(The Bridgeport News, Bridgeport, Ala., October 29, 1891.)

The Negro and the South.

We are no politicians, have never been, and never expect to be. We neither ask nor hope for any office, and think there are but few indeed that are more honorable than the position of an honest and fearless editor. We believe it to be a part of the duties of such position to encourage the weak and to give him the advantage of the turned scales. The Negro is the weaker race, and should everywhere be given at least a fair show, just encouragement, and liberal credit. That race is a factor in this country's wealth and progress, and narrow indeed must be the mind which would deny him his share therein. Most of the Southern born gentlemen had Negro playmates, a "colored mammy," and many of them were first received from their mother's wombs by the hands that were black. Base indeed must be the heart who could wish them ill or do an act to detract from their hard earned honors. We never have and never will deny them a fair race in life, and will be the first to give three cheers for the victor, regardless of the color of his skin.

At the Colored People's Day at the Southern Interstate Exposition, in Raleigh, last week, Hon. J. H. Smyth,

ex-United States Minister to Liberia, Knight Commander of the Humane Order of African Redemption, delivered the address, the equal of which we have rarely read. All of it would be interesting reading, and we make no apology in laying the following brief extracts before our readers:

* * * * *

The Negro is progressing in the South and his progress should be everywhere hailed with pride and gratification.

EXPOSITION AT CHICAGO IN 1893.

Letter to the President of the United States.

Washington, D. C., March 7, 1891.

To the Honorable the President of the United States:

Sir: I have the honor respectfully to ask your attentive consideration of the following facts:

A bill passed by Congress, which has received your official approval, has determined that there shall be held at Chicago a national exposition, which shall be commemorative and known as the Columbian Exposition.

Under this bill you have designated by appointment officers to carry out the provisions of the enactment.

The Exposition will consist of the industrial, agricultural, scientific, and art productions of the men and women of the United States of America.

No provision is made in the bill for such separate display of the intellectual and physical acquisitions of the Negro citizens as will show that they, as such, have done anything upon the lines indicated; have developed beyond the condition in which they were when landed upon the banks of the Hudson and the James Rivers more than two centuries ago. And for reasons which must be obvious to the most superficial thought in this connection.

There has been no appointment made of a Negro-American citizen charged with the duty of looking after and procuring exhibits of this citizen race.

The Exposition cannot carry out and make good the purpose of the national display without the distinctive representation of all the people of this composite nation.

These facts are of more than passing concern to the Colored people as a whole, to say nothing of the solicitude

of the thoughtful and self-respecting men and women of the race, and the Negro Republicans and Democrats.

To assume that a separate exhibit of the product of Negro labor and genius would be contrary to the purpose of the Exhibition, which is designed to be national, and he being a part of the nation is represented, and thereby dispose of the plea of the Negro citizen for distinctive representation, would be to do him a wrong designedly or ignorantly. It cannot be believed that the President of the nation would wrong a part of the nation knowingly or otherwise.

Distinctive display of exhibits must be made, otherwise American-Caucasian developments would not be known from European progress and Asiatic progress.

The American nation now, and from its incipency, has been, in its aggregate existence, made up of two great race families—whites, or Caucasians; blacks, or Negroes—notwithstanding the numerical disparity of representation of one of these families. This race distinction has been from the beginning till now to the prejudice of the latter race. If the results or the mental and physical development of these distinct races be, in the Exposition, hotch-potched, it will be to the prejudice of the Negro, and his development will be discredited.

If distinctions were not made between white and black people in the United States more than elsewhere in the civilized and uncivilized world, in every walk of life, after life, in death—contrary to the spirit of Christianity, contrary to the spirit and letter of the Constitution—then there would be no pertinency in asking that Colored citizens, as such, have a place, have representation, in this national affair, and my appeal on their behalf would be impertinent.

And, sir, it is simple justice in according the Colored citizens representation in this Exposition. The Negro shed the first blood in the revolutionary struggle for the independence of the colonies in the streets of Boston. The Attucks monument attests and commemorates the fact.

The first blood spilled was that of a Negro, in the streets of Baltimore, in the suppression of the rebellion which sought the dismemberment of the Union. But a short time ago the blood of the race was commingled with that of yours in the war which enfranchised the nation. The Ne-

gro has by his labor built and beautified and fructified the whole Southland; by his unrequited toil, refinement has been given the white womanhood in the South, and education to white manhood, and by it, in two products alone, millions of revenue have flown into the nation's treasury for the benefit of the common country. By inheritance and by purchase our title to equal consideration in national affairs is established; is made indefeasible.

Sir, the greatness, the glory, the grandeur of this nation is as much the pride of the American Negro as it is of the American white man—as much the property of my race as it is of yours.

In asking representation in this Exposition, it is not a favor sought, but the recognition of a right asked.

Permit me to suggest that the semblance of a purpose to ignore the colored citizens in this national concern is most unfortunate. Doubtless the multiplicity of duties connected with your great office interfered with your giving that consideration which has heretofore marked your acts to the personnel of the official appointees of the Exposition. This can be adjusted even at this late day by the appointment of a gentleman of the Negro race to represent his race at the Exposition. To fail to do this would seem to be an intentional insult offered to 8,000,000 loyal Negro Americans. It would appear to be such disrespect shown them as they will, if not practically disclaimed, be forced to protest against in the forum of the world.

There is precedent for doing what is by the race desired in this matter, in the course pursued toward us at the New Orleans Exposition. The American Negro citizen was represented there, and not by proxy, not indiscriminately Mr. President, “for justice all time summer.”

Foreign nations with whom we are in treaty relations have been invited to America, asked to send exhibits. Liberia, a Negro republic in West Africa, has been asked to participate. Hayti and Santo Domingo, Negro republics on our own continent, have been requested to send exhibits for this prospective display. Haytien Negroes under Rochambeau assisted in the War of Independence. These Governments could not be slighted, could not be overlooked, since each and all are in treaty stipulations with the United States of America.

By the law of nations all states are equals. By the law of God and the Declaration of our Independence all Americans should be "equals before the law."

The aggregated civilized and uncivilized peoples of Liberia, every man, woman, and child in Hayti and Santo Domingo, will not make up the sum of 8,000,000 of Negro Americans in the United States.

These foreign Negro nations know that on this continent there are nearly 15,000,000 of men and women of like descent with themselves, 8,000,000 of whom are citizens of the United States, and one and one-quarter of a million of whom are members of the political party of the administration.

Sir, I most respectfully submit that it is your high privilege and official duty to see to it that the eight millions of Negro citizens, the one and one-quarter millions of black voters here, shall not be humiliated in 1893, in presence of their brethren from Africa and from the Queen of the Antillies, by being denied a status in the Exposition, which shall be visible to the entire foreign world and cognizable by them.

These sentiments, by me expressed, find response in the hearts and consciousness of the colored people in North Carolina, from Cherokee to Currituck, in the nation from Maine to Texas, and from one to the other ocean.

I most respectfully ask that an officer of the Exposition, of the Negro race, be appointed, and that a place be made in the Exposition for the display of Negro industry, agricultural products, art, and scientific achievement, inventive genius, and educational development.

With sentiments of the most profound respect, I have the honor, Mr. President, to subscribe myself, your obedient servant,

JOHN H. SMYTH,
Ex-United States Minister.

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